

FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: April 25, 2019

Agenda Item: Pig Farm Fishing Access Site Lease (R3)

Division: Fisheries

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

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Background:

The proposed Pig Farm FAS is located along the Yellowstone River on a parcel of Montana Department of Transportation land approximately 13 river miles downstream of Livingston. The next upstream public access site is Sheep Mountain FAS. Silt deposition at Sheep Mountain FAS has created a land barrier between the boat ramp and the river making it impossible to launch boats there during the majority of the float season. The proposed MDT parcel would provide an alternate location for boat access to the Yellowstone River. A pioneered access already exists at the location but there is no formal agreement with MDT for this activity. This parcel is also currently being leased for grazing by the adjacent landowner. Initial discussions with the landowner and MDT representatives have been favorable to developing a more formal access at this site. The landowner has expressed his desire for signage that would direct people to the FAS, due to a long history of the public coming to his residence looking for access to the river. The remaining issue still to be resolved is the at-grade railroad crossing. FWP and Montana Rail Link representatives will meet to discuss the safety concerns of formalizing a vehicle crossing at this location. A diagnostic review including representatives from FWP, MDT, and Rail Link will be conducted to determine the level of improvements and protection that will be required at the crossing. Montana Rail Link has committed to paying for the surfacing improvements. FWP will be responsible for the cost of upgrades to the crossing as determined by the diagnostic team.

Public Involvement Process & Results:

An Environmental Assessment was prepared and released for public comment from Dec. 21 through Jan. 18. Only one comment was received. The commenter stated that "... we all know that the use on the Yellowstone seems to increase every year, and the more FAS' there are, the better it is to help get boats in and off the river and maybe spread out the usage ..." This same commenter said, "my only negative comment is the name doesn't sound great" and suggested that we call it Highland Livestock FAS in consideration of the neighboring landowner. Since the name "Pig Farm" is used locally for this pioneered site, continuing to use that name is in keeping with the department's naming policy that states "the most important criteria in naming a site is to use a name that is presently used, if at all possible."

Alternatives and Analysis:

The proposed action will provide boating access that has been lost at the upstream Sheep Mountain FAS. No other alternatives were evaluated.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale:

Providing public access to the Yellowstone River at this location will enhance opportunities for boating and angling in this reach of the river. FWP recommends the department obtain a Recreational Use Permit from MDT and continue negotiations with Montana Rail Link to improve the at-grade railroad crossing.

Proposed Motion:

I move to approve FWP's request to acquire a Recreational Use Permit from the Department of Transportation.

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Public Comment Received (1):

Name: Bert Otis

Dear Fish Wildlife & Parks Commission,

I support Alternative B the Proposed Action to lease approximately 3 acres from the MDT and develop a FAS on the Yellowstone River between Livingston and Springdale. As we all know the use on the Yellowstone seems to increase ever year, and the more FAS there are, the better it is to help get boats in and off the river and maybe spread out the usage. The plan looks good and my only negative comment is the name doesn't sound great, maybe call it Highland Livestock FAS.

Thanks

Bert Otis

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